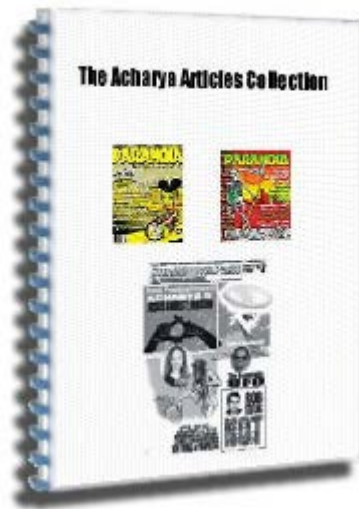


The Acharya Articles Collection

Excerpted/adapted from the book

Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled

by Acharya S aka D.M. Murdock



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Preface

“The reproaching cry of heretic, infidel, atheist, etc., will be raised against the author of these lectures, by every fiery intolerant bigot into whose hands they may fall. But he alone is the true infidel who forsakes the laws of his nature, and gives up his mind to a belief in fabulous and demoralizing legends, which contradict all experience, and stand in opposition to the testimony of his own sense and reason.”

Christian Mythology Unveiled, 1842

The three articles in this “Acharya Articles Collection” represent adapted excerpts from my book *Suns of God: Krishna, Buddha and Christ Unveiled* that were published in *Paranoia* and *Steamshovel Press* magazines.

- “The Pagan Origins of the Christian Mysteries,” *Paranoia*, #30.
- “Jesus Christ, Mason of God,” *Steamshovel Press*, #21.
- “Moon Mary, Queen of Heaven,” *Paranoia*, #37.

I hope you enjoy these articles—if you do, be sure to get yourself a copy of *Suns of God*, which contains much more in almost 600 pages, including almost 1800 citations/footnotes and some 250 sources, as well as dozens of illuminating illustrations!

D.M. Murdock
aka Acharya S
February 2009

The Pagan Origins of the Christian Mysteries

"The importance of the Hellenistic mysteries by which emergent Christianity was surrounded cannot be exaggerated. One writer calls them 'the principal factor in the spiritual life of the ancient world,' another, 'the last word of the pagan religions,' and such expressions are surely not too strong."

Dr. Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery* (4)

Unbeknownst to the masses, and despite the fervent objections by early Church fathers to "the mysteries," Christianity possesses its own mysteries. In reality, many of Christianity's most germane features were part of the Pagan mysteries, which the Christians turned inside out by making them public. Indeed, Christianity was "in its origin a secret society." As Ernest de Bunsen remarks, "Mysteries there had always been in every established Church, and mysteries formed necessarily the rock of the Catholic Church."¹ As the Catholic Encyclopedia says, concerning the word "mystery":

In the language of the early Christians the mysteries were those religious teachings that were carefully guarded from the knowledge of the profane....

In the New Testament the word mystery is applied ordinarily to the sublime revelation of the Gospel (Matt., xiii, 11; Col., ii, 2; I Tim., iii, 9; I Cor., xv, 51), and to the Incarnation and life of the Saviour and His manifestation by the preaching of the Apostles (Rom., xvi, 25; Eph., iii, 4; vi, 19; Col., i, 26; iv, 3).²

In fact, the first Vatican Council made it anathema for anyone to declare that there are no Christian mysteries. "Christianity began as a mystery religion," says Frank Zindler in "How Jesus Got a Life." He continues:

While modern Christianity trumpets its message openly and to all, with little regard for those uninterested in hearing its "good news," it was not so in the beginning. A careful reading of the Pauline epistles and the gospels (supplemented by modern documentary discoveries) shows that Christianity began as a mystery cult, replete with initiations, secrets and multiple levels of indoctrination.

The word mystery (Greek, *musterion*: "what is known only to the initiated") occurs twenty-seven times in the official New Testament, and almost all of these occurrences demonstrate the existence of a secret infrastructure in the nascent cult.³

The twenty-seven New Testament verses containing the word "mystery" or "mysteries" are as follows (per the Blue Letter Bible): Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10; Rom. 11:25, 16:25; 1 Cor. 2:7, 4:1, 13:2, 14:2, 15:51; Eph. 1:9, 3:3-4, 3:9-10, 5:32, 6:19; Col. 1:26, 1:27, 2:2-3, 4:3 2 Thes. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:9, 3:16; Rev. 1:20, 10:7, 17:5 and 17:7. In these verses, there is much talk about the "mysteries of the kingdom of God," the "wisdom of God in a mystery," the "mysteries of God," the "mystery of Christ," the "mystery of the gospel," the "mystery of iniquity," the "mystery of faith," the "mystery of godliness," etc. In addition to this list is 1 Corinthians 2:1, which contains the word "testimony" in some versions; however, the Revised Standard Version of the Bible notes, "Other ancient authorities read *mystery* (or *secret*)."

¹ Bunsen, 373.

² www.newadvent.org/cathen/10662a.htm

³ www.atheists.org/church/jesuslife.html

The Strong's definition of the Greek word for mystery or mysteries, μυστηριον, is as follows:

- 1) hidden thing, secret, mystery
 - 1a) generally mysteries, religious secrets, confided only to the initiated and not to ordinary mortals
 - 1b) a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding
 - 1c) a hidden purpose or counsel
 - 1c1) secret will
 - 1c1a) of men
 - 1c1b) of God: the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly
- 2) in rabbinic writings, it denotes the mystic or hidden sense
 - 2a) of an OT saying
 - 2b) of an image or form seen in a vision
 - 2c) of a dream⁴

A significant number of these New Testament references are without a doubt indistinguishable in meaning from the concepts promulgated by the Pagan mystery schools, i.e., the mysteries. This fact is particularly evident in the writings attributed to Paul, which are gnostic (relating esoteric knowledge) in many aspects. Regarding Paul's obvious mysteries nomenclature, W.R. Halliday remarks:

...St. Paul frequently employs for his purposes the imagery and technical vocabulary of the Hellenistic mystery religions. That he should do so is...not merely natural but almost inevitable....⁵

Halliday also states:

...when St. Paul uses the analogy of a mystery, he is not, as commentators seem often to suppose, thinking in terms of the Eleusinian Mysteries of Periclean Athens, but of the mystery religions of his own day, whose vocabulary indeed he frequently borrows for his own purpose.⁶

While denying that Christianity has anything to do with Paganism and its mysteries, and protesting that the religion is unique in practically everything and "ruthlessly exclusive," the Catholic Encyclopedia subsequently admits, "That the terminology of the mysteries was largely transported into Christian use (Paul, Ignatius, Origen, Clement etc.), is certain; that liturgy (especially of baptism), organization (of the catechumenate), disciplina arcani were affected by them, is highly probable."⁷

Paul, "Steward of the Mysteries of God"

The "apostle to the Gentiles," St. Paul considers himself a "steward" or "dispenser" of God's mysteries, as he states at 1 Corinthians 4:1: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." As another example, in addition

⁴ www.blueletterbible.org/tmp_dir/strongs/972619347.html

⁵ Halliday, 4.

⁶ Halliday, 144.

⁷ www.newadvent.org/cathen/11388a.htm

to the more obvious references, the mysteries are also indicated at 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, in which Paul says:

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was caught up into Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter.

Paul's gnostic, mysteries language is likewise apparent in his descriptions of the heavenly hierarchy. As the translator of 3rd century Syrian philosopher Iamblichos's *Egyptian Mysteries*, Alexander Wilder, relates:

Scutellius enumerates nine classes of spiritual beings, namely: 1. Invisible Gods; 2. Visible Gods of the Sky; 3. Archangels; 4. Angels; 5. Demons; 6. Leaders; 7. Princes; 8. Heroes or Demi-gods; 9. Souls. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians enumerates the following: 1. Princes; 2. Authorities; 3. Kosmokrators or princes of the Cosmos; 4. Spiritual essences in the super-celestial spheres.... These, the Kosmokrators, are supposed by Thomas Taylor to be the rulers of the planets. The Assyrians and Chaldaean enumerated nine distinct orders—three Triads of three classes each.⁸

Wilder further states:

Rulers of the cosmic world: the demons allotted to the several regions of the universe. The term occurs in the *Pauline Epistle to the Ephesians*, vi, 12.⁹

At Romans 16:25-26, Paul refers to "my gospel" and the "preaching of Jesus Christ," as well as "the mystery which was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed and through the prophetic writings is made known to all nations..." This statement is clearly an acknowledgement that Christianity is an exoteric revelation of the mysteries, which had been passed along in secret for centuries, if not millennia, but which were now being blurted out by "Christian" initiates, against their oaths. The Christian interpretation, of course, has been that "the mystery" was Jewish, found in the Jewish scriptures, rather than in the Pagan mysteries. However, as has been demonstrated abundantly in my books *The Christ Conspiracy* and *Suns of God*, such "Jewish" scriptures, rituals and magic rites themselves have their predecessors and counterparts in other cultures.

For further information regarding Paul's mystery jargon, Halliday cites Reitzenstein's *Die hellenistische Mysterienreligionen*. Halliday, however, continually attempts to justify these correspondences between Christianity and Paganism, opining that it is "only natural" and claiming that the polemics regarding the "borrowing"—polemics he correctly identifies as having taken place from the very beginning of the Christian era—are "often irrelevant...both in ancient and in modern times." Despite this assertion, the reality is that Christianity has falsely presented itself as "divine revelation," instituted by a "new" incarnation of God, and teeming with new concepts hot off God's presses. Never, in fact, is a polemic against such a grand falsehood "irrelevant."

Concerning Paul and his involvement in the mysteries, the anonymous author of *Christian Mythology Unveiled* ("CMU") pulls no punches in stating the obvious:

⁸ Iamblichos, 81-82.

⁹ Iamblichos, 274.

On a careful examination of the quirks and quibbles of St. Paul, it plainly appears that he had some smattering of the Pagan mysteries; and just as it suited his interest for the time being, or the degree of knowledge in his auditors, he used the exoteric or esoteric doctrines: the former was adapted for street-preaching, and bamboozling the long-eared multitude; and the latter was used only when he was addressing the initiated few, some of whom were, in all probability, playing the same game as himself.¹⁰

It is quite obvious that "Paul" and other Christian writers were members or initiates of a number of secret societies, mystery schools and salvation cults. Indeed, their language reveals esoteric membership knowledge at practically every turn.

In addition to the abundant mysteries imagery and language in the so-called Pauline epistles are hints in other canonical texts, such as 2 Peter 1:4:

...he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.

The use of parables attributed to Jesus, and the blatant acknowledgement of the masses' incomprehensibility at Acts 28:26, for example, likewise reveal an initiatory model.

The enigmatic biblical book of Revelation also clearly demonstrates the mysteries, in a manner that has mystified millions of readers over the centuries. As established in *The Christ Conspiracy*, Revelation is an astronomical and astrological text, recounting the basic mythos of the "Great Year," or precession of the equinoxes, specifically during the Age of Aries, the Ram or Lamb. Concerning Revelation, Charles Dupuis remarked:

The object of the apocalyptic fiction was not only to excite the astonishment of the Neophyte initiated into the mysteries of the Lamb, but also to strike terror into the heart of all those who should not remain faithful to the laws of the Initiation...The priests wanted to rule the World by fear.¹¹

Church Fathers Attest

In addition to these canonical texts are the writings of the Church fathers, who refer a number of times to "the mysteries," both Pagan and Christian. Indeed, these Church writings reveal a great deal of knowledge about the so-called Pagan mysteries,¹² which is to be expected, since the Christian mysteries were merely a rehash and continuation of their Pagan counterparts. Regarding the writings of the early Church, Halliday says:

...much of the early Christian literature, particularly the writings which stand as it were upon the fringe of orthodoxy, becomes intelligible only in its context in pagan literary history. Both its form and its content, its weaknesses and even some of its strength, it owes to its literary *milieu*. The character, for example, of such documents as the *Pseudo-Clementines* or the *Apocryphal Acts*, is explained by their setting as part of a contemporary literature; while Christian Gnosticism can only be understood in reference to Hellenistic mystery cults and the magical *papyri*.¹³

¹⁰ *CMU*, 147.

¹¹ Dupuis, 425.

¹² Freke, 85.

¹³ Halliday, 6.

Concerning the Christian mysteries, in *Contra Celsus* (3.59), Origen speaks of inviting "them to our mysteries, for we speak wisdom among the perfect." "The perfect," of course, refers to those initiates who are *perfected* in the mysteries. In fact, the word "perfect" (*teleios* in Greek, which also means "man," as in adulthood) as used in the *canonical* epistles is the very term utilized to designate the higher level of initiation in the Pagan mystery schools. One Christian brotherhood that appears to have continued this tradition is that of the Cathars, who called their highest adepts "parfaits," French for "perfect."¹⁴ The Cathars seem to have been the continuation, more or less interrupted, of a Gnostic Docetic group that spread throughout much of Europe and was most renowned during the 12th to 14th centuries, until the Catholic Church slaughtered thousands of its members in an effort to eradicate its "heresy." Part of this "heresy" was the insistence that Christ never took incarnation, i.e., did not have a physical body, as the Cathars taught that matter was "evil" and that "Christ...did not really undergo human birth or death."¹⁵ In other words, Jesus Christ was *not* a "historical" figure.

Furthermore, a common term within these mystery schools was the Greek word *adelphos*, which means "brother," such that an initiate would be called "brother of the Lord" or "brother in the Lord," a reference not to a sibling of a historical savior but to the status of the initiate in the brotherhood. This fact, naturally, validates that the designations "brother of the Lord" and "brother of Jesus" concerning James and others refer not to a blood relation but to fellowship in a brotherhood.

The Christian mysteries are discussed by Clement Alexandrinus in *The Stromata* (ch. X), in which he also uses the term "the perfect" in its mysteries context.¹⁶ This chapter is entitled, "THE OPINION OF THE APOSTLES ON VEILING THE MYSTERIES OF THE FAITH," in which Clement calls Paul the "divine apostle." In *The Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Origen states that the "saints before the bodily advent of Jesus" were at an advantage in understanding "the mysteries of divinity," because "the Word of God was their teacher before He became flesh."¹⁷ Origen further refers to "the sacred mysteries of religion," as well as "the mysteries of Christ's deity" and "the heavenly mysteries," among other references. In the *Divine Liturgy of St. James*, Lactantius repeatedly refers to "the divine and pure mysteries," "the divine mysteries," "His pure mysteries," "heavenly mysteries," "holy mysteries" and "Thy pure mysteries."¹⁸ The Christian mysteries are also addressed by St. Ambrose (340-397 CE), for one, in his treatise *On the Mysteries*, which included baptism, confirmation and the eucharist, the latter of which Ambrose insists is traceable to the "high priest" Melchizedek¹⁹ ("Righteous Molech").

Without a doubt the mystery and mysteries in both the New Testament and the writings of the Church fathers represent spiritual concepts that can be known only by the initiated: In other words, Christianity is a mystery cult. Indeed, the Christ myth began to become formulated when Jews and Israelites were initiated into the Pagan mysteries. Having no

¹⁴ Baigent, 59.

¹⁵ Webster's Dictionary, "Cathar."

¹⁶ www.newadvent.org/fathers/02105.htm

¹⁷ www.newadvent.org/fathers/101506.htm

¹⁸ www.newadvent.org/fathers/0717.htm

¹⁹ www.newadvent.org/fathers/3405.htm

consideration for keeping the secrets of the Gentiles, they then ran about divulging them, such loose-lipped individuals becoming known as Christians. These Christians were then persecuted for exposing the secrets of the Pagan mysteries. Because the populace did not know these mysteries, these early Christians pretended that they originated them.

At the same time as they were exposing the Pagan mysteries and claiming them as their own, however, Christians were, as typically "Jewish," very cultish and secretive, to the point where they were suspected of sedition. As Walter Cassels says:

...Celsus repeatedly accuses Christians...of teaching their doctrines secretly and against the law, which seeks them out and punishes them with death, and this indicates a period of persecution.²⁰

Although religions of all sorts in general were tolerated, secret societies were closely watched and outlawed in the Roman Empire, as Rev. John P. Lundy relates:

About the beginning of the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98, a special law was published against *Hetaeriae*, or fraternities, what we now call secret clubs or brotherhoods, which were established up and down the Roman empire. Their pretext was social feasting, and the better dispatch of business, friendship, and good fellowship. But they were suspected by the government to be hotbeds of sedition, plots, and conspiracies.²¹

Obviously, the situation with the ancient secret societies and mystery cults is much the same as it is with today's fraternities and societies, such as the Masons. Naturally, representatives of "the government" are often also members of these groups, which means that the suspicion concerning them is held by the people themselves, rather than governments.

As concerns the source of the "Christian" mysteries, in addition to those already explored in *Suns of God*, such as the Samothracian and Eleusinian, is prominently featured the Egyptian religion. As abundantly demonstrated in *The Christ Conspiracy*, *Suns of God* and most extensively in *Christ in Egypt: The Horus-Jesus Connection*, Christianity took many of its elements from Egypt. A number of the Church fathers were educated as "doctors" and "spiritual physicians," i.e., Therapeuts, in Alexandria and elsewhere in Egypt. These Christian Alexandrian graduates included Clement, Origen and Theognostus, all of whom headed the Alexandrian school; Dionysius, the bishop of Alexandria; and Gregory of Nazianzus, among others. At Alexandria, these architects of Christianity had at their disposal an enormous library with books from around the known world—books that doubtlessly discussed the mysteries in some form or another. It can be stated with a high degree of certainty that virtually every concept in Christianity could be found in some or many of those books....

The Astrotheological Mystery

In any event, that Paul and the others were revealing the pre-Christian mysteries is also clear from Colossians 1:26, which says, "[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to the saints." What mystery is this that has been hidden for ages and is now revealed in Christianity? Basically, it is the

²⁰ Cassels, 539.

²¹ Lundy, 55.

celestial and solar mythos and ritual, i.e., astrotheology. For example, the New Testament esoteric or mysteries language is apparent also at Hebrews 8:5, in reference to the "true tent" or tabernacle, of which the earthly tabernacle is only "a copy and shadow of the heavenly sanctuary." At 9:23, the author refers to "heavenly things" and the true heavenly sanctuary into which Christ has entered. CMU comments that these references mean, "unquestionably, astronomical truths concealed from the millions, under the veil of allegory." Paul himself uses the mysteries term "veil," as at 2 Corinthians 4:3, referring to "our gospel" as "veiled to those who are perishing." Moreover, when "Jesus" is made to refer to the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" at Matthew 13:11, he speaks to the initiated, CMU asserts, regarding "the symbolical worship of the sun, and other celestial bodies."

The core of these mysteries, now being revealed to the masses in Christianity, was the coming of the redeeming savior, who would rescue the world from cold and darkness. As we can see in *The Christ Conspiracy*, *Suns of God* and *Christ in Egypt*, this central savior is the sun, called by various names, including Joshua, Jasius or *Jesus*, long prior to the Christian era. The revealers of this doctrine, of course, did not state anything so obviously, leaving the uninitiated Christian masses to believe that the solar symbolism, mythos and ritual were "literal" tales involving a "historical" godman of Jewish extraction. Yet, the solar symbolism is inescapable. For example, at Philippians 3:20, the author says, "But our commonwealth [conversation, citizenship] is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body..." This language is peculiar for someone who believes in a "historical" Jesus but it is perfectly fitting for an initiate into the mysteries, in which the sun is not only the symbol of deity but also of immortality.

Concerning the astrotheology of the New Testament, CMU concludes:

Thus it is an astronomical key that lays open the secret arcanum of all that Paul, or any other of the New Testament writers say about "Christ and heavenly things"; for these, when the veil of allegory is withdrawn, stand confessed in the Sun, (the Mithras, or Mediator) moon, stars, the elements and seasons, the deification of which formed the occult astro-theology which was the basis of all the religions of the east; and from which christianism is only a distorted emanation.²²

Indeed, the astrotheological nature of the Christian mysteries, like that of the mysteries upon which they were founded, is evident:

Everywhere we see that the God of Light under the name of the Lamb was the great Divinity, which was the great object of devotion in the Initiations of the Christians. The mysteries of Christ are therefore merely the mysteries of the God Sun in its equinoctial triumph, when it assumes the forms of the first sign, or those of the celestial Lamb; consequently, the figure of the Lamb was the emblem or the seal with which in those times the Neophytes of this sect were marked.²³

Dupuis continues:

The reason why the Ram or the Lamb is playing now with the Christians so important a figure is because it fills the part, which in ancient times was occupied by the Bull in the

²² CMU, 150.

²³ Dupuis, 252.

mysteries of Bacchus and Mithras. Osiris and Bacchus were both represented with the forms of the ancient equinoctial Bull, and died and resuscitated like Christ: the mysteries of their passion were represented in their sanctuaries, as were those of Attys and of Christ, with the Phrygians and with the Christians.²⁴

Dupuis also mentions several Church fathers, including Athanasius, Augustine, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, Lactantius and Firmicus, as discussing the Egyptian god "Osiris" or the "God Sun" whose death was mourned "every good Friday." The French scholar further states:

My object shall have been attained, if I have succeeded in convincing a small number of my readers (because the many I abandon to the priests) and that it should seem to them proved that Christ is merely the Sun, that the Mysteries of the Christian religion have the Light for object, like those of the Persians and of Mithras, of Osiris, Adonis, etc., and that this religion differs only in the names from the ancient religions...²⁵

Also according to Dupuis, long into the Christian era (e.g., the 14th century), the "Christians or their Doctors" maintained their "secret doctrine," holding it above the heads of the vulgar masses. Indeed, the higher initiates continue to hold close the knowledge of Christ as the sun, as well as, of course, that Christianity is simply Paganism synthesized with Judaism. Concerning such priestly behavior, CMU says:

Originally, the word *mystery* signified the veil (mistos) which covered knowledge: but amongst Christian priests, it has been made the veil by which the most wicked deceptions are covered.²⁶

Despite the chicanery, it is evident that the "names and significations" of Pagan symbols used in the mysteries "passed into the newly-born Christianity."²⁷ In other words, the brotherhood has suppressed the fact that the majority of important Christian motifs are found in ancient pre-Christian cultures. As CMU also states:

Beyond the limits of the papal conclave of cardinals, there is every reason to believe that very little true, or esoteric, Christianity is known; and that only among the learned and most laborious in fearless research. In that modern cabbala of the initiated, the secret is guarded with the most solemn and profound vigilance; and the sacred trust is that there is not a vestige—not an iota of Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, that did not belong to Paganism, thousands of years before the reign of Tiberius; and that all the "religion" practiced in Europe is merely the exoteric quackery of the old universal solar mythos. In like manner, it was only the initiated Jews of their cabbala, who knew the secret of the same mythos. This was called Gnosticism.²⁸

For ages in many parts of the world the central object of the mysteries was the *sun*. The mystery language refers constantly to "light," to the dispelling of darkness, etc. Its goal is purification of the soul—by *Sol*, who was the purifier in numerous cultures, long before the Christian era. There can be little doubt that a spurious "historical" Jesus was placed instead of the sun in the central role of the mysteries: Yet, he will ever remain the Sun of Righteousness.

²⁴ Dupuis, 256.

²⁵ Dupuis, 298.

²⁶ CMU, 71fn.

²⁷ Lundy, 26.

²⁸ CMU, viii.

Other Mysterious Aspects

As part of the mysteries surrounding this grandiose God Sun, the Christian mysteries encompassed the same things as the Pagan mysteries: To wit, baptism, communion, the eucharist, immortality through resurrection, etc. In addition, like their Pagan predecessors, in particular the Dionysiacs, Christians also participated in secret "midnight rites," called "Agapae," or "love feasts," as at Jude 1:12:

The Agapae, or love feasts of the early Christians, were close imitations of the bacchanal orgies: at the latter, it was a vital principle, that no action whatsoever constituted a crime, if committed by any of the initiated during their meetings. It appears that the spirit of this horrible license was fully entered into by the Christians.—Vide Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, vol. 2, p. 394.²⁹

Moreover, the secretive Christians were accused of the standard vices of alien cults: Atheism, orgies, infant-sacrifice and cannibalism, etc. The eating of their god certainly *was* one of the Christian mysteries, as was his sacrifice or expiatory death:

Jesus Christ, the son of a king, is offered by God to himself, to avert his own vengeance, and this is repeatedly called the *mystery of the Gospel*...³⁰

Another part of the mysteries were the wisdom sayings, or logia, which had been passed down for ages orally and through initiation, and which are not an indication of a "historical" Jesus. Concerning the logia, Gerald Massey says:

Now, there is plenty of evidence to show that these sayings, which are the admitted foundations of the canonical gospels, were not first uttered by a personal Founder of Christianity, nor invented afterwards by any of his followers. Many of them were pre-extant, pre-historic, and pre-Christian.³¹

Massey also states:

The Logia or sayings are the *mythoi* in Greek. They were mythical sayings assigned to Sayers, who were also mythical in that mythology which preceded and accounts for our Theology and Christology. The sayings were the oral wisdom, and, as the name implies, that wisdom was uttered by word of mouth alone. They existed before writing, and were not allowed to be written afterwards. The mode of communicating them in the Mysteries, as in Masonry, was from mouth to ear; and, in passing, it may be remarked that the war of the Papacy against Masonry is because it is a survival of the pre-Christian Mysteries, and a living, however, imperfect, witness against Historic Christianity! Mythos or myth denotes anything delivered by word of mouth, myth and mouth being identical at root.³²

These pre-Christian mysteries and sayings were also the utterances of Sophia, the female personification of Wisdom.

Enigmatic Environs

The fact is that the ancient world at the time of the formation of Christianity was teeming with religions, sects, cults, mystery schools, secret societies and other brotherhoods—or, collectively, *collegia*. One of the reasons these "colleges" were so popular and appealing

²⁹ *CMU*, 153 fn.

³⁰ Taylor, *Diegesis*, 168.

³¹ Massey, 54.

³² Massey, 58.

was because they were "universal" in including the individual, despite rank, race or other status symbol. As Halliday says:

Such were the Orphic brotherhoods in Greece, and somewhat similar religious fraternities were a characteristic feature of the oriental cults which, in increasing numbers, swept over the Graeco-Roman world.³³

Many of these collegia were either local or very loosely associated with others, but that of Dionysus, for example, was more organized, with cells in a variety of places. Concerning the guild of roving Dionysiac artists, Halliday states, "This society developed a single organisation with affiliated branches throughout the Empire, its headquarters being in Rome."³⁴

These Dionysiac "artists" were surely members of a mystery school, possibly Samothracian but certainly Orphic, and brought with them as they traveled mystery plays that taught spiritual and ethical concepts: In other words, they spread religion. It is quite evident that this pre-Christian "church," with its wandering actor-preachers, served as an archetypical organization upon which the Christian structure was founded. As this group spread about, it no doubt picked up concepts from its various ports of call; hence, it served to amalgamate religious concepts, exactly as did Christianity.

To recap, the atmosphere into which Christianity was born was a world of mystery schools, secret societies, apocalyptic sects and salvation cults, replete with spiritual concepts and deities of all sorts, including many that would be used in the formation of the Christ character. Indeed, the world at the time was not as small and unpopulated as commonly believed: It was in many places a sophisticated network of towns and cities. Apostles of all types of religions, cults and sects moved freely from England to India, and beyond. Egypt was a bustle with religiosity, possessing practically every notion found in the later Christianity, whose doctors and doctrinal authorities were frequently educated at Alexandria, which possessed the world's most famous university and library, and where devotees from near and far flocked to become educated. Also, Rome itself was a hotbed of practically every sect, cult and religion in the known world. Ideas were widely exchanged, and initiates of one mystery school or secret society were often also members of others. Priests and monks of all variety traveled to monasteries, temple sites and other brotherhood strongholds in order to learn each others' priestcraft. Priestcraft, in fact, was highly developed, with new gods being created, along with requisite rituals and (bogus) relics. It is preposterous, therefore, for Christianity to be presented as a "new revelation," utterly uninfluenced and unaffected by, as well as unrelated to, pre-Christian cultures and religions. In reality, Christianity is a mystery cult pieced together from a wide variety of pre-Christian influences, including and especially the Pagan mysteries.

³³ Halliday, 21.

³⁴ Halliday, 58.

Jesus Christ, Mason of God

“Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ.”

Matthew 23:10

Over the ages, there have existed numerous brotherhoods that have possessed gods, rituals, rites, myths and mysteries quite similar to those of Christianity but that preceded the Christian era by centuries and millennia. Many of these brotherhoods have much in common with each other, having been demonstrated by numerous authorities beginning in antiquity, to be related in one fashion or another. The similarities that connect specific fraternities are not limited to gods, rituals, myths, etc., but also include physical artifacts such as symbols and architecture, i.e., masonry. As shown, a number of crafts guilds have also been religious brotherhoods and have their origins in ancient times. The religious tradition of the Irish, for example, included "the divine smith" who was likewise "a great builder, or a resourceful master mason."¹ The giant smith or forger was a very important and popular image in ancient English culture, as it was in Greek and Roman. In Egypt, the famed and "very ancient" god Iemhetep was the "god of physicians and those who dealt in medical magic."² As physicians had their god, who was likewise a physician, so too did carpenters and smiths, the latter of whom revered Ptah-Hephaistos in Egypt. In the same manner masons revered a masonic or stone-cutter god, and it is apparent that, as was the case with these various other crafts in ancient times, there were masonic guilds that also served as mystery schools, secret societies and religious sects.

Concerning the history of "Masonry" as an organization, the Catholic Encyclopedia states that the many "fantastic theories" regarding it include that it was founded by God, "the Great Architect," and that "Adam, the Patriarchs, the kings and philosophers of old" were its "patrons." CE continues: "Even Jesus Christ is included in the list as Grand Master of the Christian Church." Over the centuries, Masons have laid claim to "Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, the Pyramids, and Solomon's Temple." The mysteries, whether Dionysian, Druidic, Egyptian, Eleusinian or Mithraic, are at the heart of Masonry, as are "sects and schools such as the Pythagoreans, Essenes, Culdees, Zoroastrians, and Gnostics." Masonry's origin has been traced to "the Evangelical societies that preceded the Reformation," as well as to the Knights Templar or St. John's Knights. Masonic origins have been asserted of practically every secret society, including "the alchemists, Rosicrucians, and Cabbalists," and so on, from Britain to Arabia to China. "It is claimed also that Pythagoras founded the Druidic institution and hence that Masonry probably existed in England 500 years before the Christian Era."³ In *Inside The Brotherhood*, Martin Short writes: "In terms of ritual, modern Masons may owe more to Ancient Egyptians than to England's cathedral-builders, something they can scarcely admit today."⁴ Short, however, considers the contentions of antiquity based on connections to Druids, etc., to be part of Masonry's "broad lunatic fringe."

¹ Stewart, 119.

² Spence, 151.

³ www.newadvent.org/cathen/09771a.htm

⁴ Short, 71.

Origins of Freemasonry

Current Masonic lore states that "Freemasonry" only began in England in 1717, an assertion readily disproved by the existence of Rosslyn Chapel in Scotland, constructed between 1440 and 1490, and which displays not only extraordinary masonry itself but also many of the well-known symbols and rituals of the Masonic brotherhood. As Masonic authors Knight and Lomas state concerning Rosslyn Chapel, "the structure is covered in...a combination of Celtic and Templar motifs with elements that are instantly recognisable to modern Freemasons."⁵ This fact places Masonry as an arcane organization in the 15th century; however, CE relates that the word "Freemasonry" is found in a manuscript from the 13th century. Also averred by Knight and Lomas is that the "history" proposed by the historians of modern Freemasonry is designed to establish supremacy, i.e., for the lodges of the British Isles.

Regardless of the presumed modern history of Masonry as an organized brotherhood, various important aspects of the society are quite ancient. Indeed, the modern Masonic mysteries are "hopelessly garbled and watered-down versions of genuine mysteries of earlier times."⁶ In *The Brotherhood*, Stephen Knight submits that claims to antiquity are incautious; yet, he acknowledges that "the philosophic, religious and ritualistic concoction" that is "speculative Freemasonry" is "drawn from many sources—some of them, like the Isis-Osiris myth, dating back to the dawn of history."⁷ As stated, for millennia God himself has been considered the "Great Architect of the Universe," evidenced by the fact that the Egyptian creator god Ptah was considered the "inspiration" for the "mystery of building."⁸ The Egyptian high god Osiris too was the "god of fortifications," equated with Nimrod, the alleged builder of the biblical Tower of Babel, believed in modern Masonry to be the first Mason.⁹

Egypt's role in Masonry is significant: For example, the Great Pyramid has been deemed the "greatest Masonic temple that has ever been built." Indeed, the pyramid's masonry is astonishing—the result of an obviously sophisticated and organized culture with profound mathematical and astronomical knowledge. In other words, the architects and builders represented a school or society of skilled and knowledgeable professors and acolytes. Did this ancient *masonic* group possess initiations and secrets? Was it a secret society? The answer to both questions is yes.

Another ancient advanced culture of "master builders" was that of the enormous Harrapan civilization in the Indus Valley, dating back at least 4,500 years. In the final analysis, says Bonwick, "No one can doubt that Free-masonry, *Phré* or Sun masonry, existed B.C. 4000, if not much earlier..."¹⁰

Part of the difficulty in accepting such antiquity for the Masonic order stems from the very fact that its mysteries were *secret* and that they were passed down orally for

⁵ Knight and Lomas, *SM*, 24.

⁶ Temple, 74.

⁷ Knight, S., 15-16.

⁸ Knight and Lomas, *HK*, 100.

⁹ Hislop, 43.

¹⁰ Bonwick, 198.

millennia, so that they would not be destroyed by rival cultists.¹¹ Despite the inculcated disbelief, like the carpenter and smith cults, the masonic cult, with its "symbolic teachings," predates not only Christianity but also Judaism.¹² Evidence demonstrates that there has been an "unbroken chain" of masonic knowledge, passing from Egypt to Israel, via "sacred geometry," an engineering and architectural "art form," as well as other skills. Purportedly, this knowledge was "lost until the Knights Templar discovered documentation about it during their excavations under the Temple Mount in the twelfth century."¹³ Whether or not there were gaps of a century or a millennium, and whether or not Masonic endeavors were made by organizations or by a few individuals, it is clear that, along with the actual physical and scientific elements of building and stonecutting, i.e., masonry, many of the concepts and rituals found in Masonry are ancient and have been passed along over a significant period of time.

Masonry and Judaism

Although masonic religious guilds long predate Judaism and Christianity, in its current form "Freemasonry" has been highly Judaized. In *Chapter Masonry* (1901), Christian writer Ronayne, a high initiate and Worshipful Master of the "Keystone Lodge" in Chicago before renouncing Freemasonry, describes modern Masonry as loaded with biblical references, and as thoroughly connected to early biblical lore, tracing its origins to "Solomon's Temple" and its purported architect, "Hiram Abiff." Modern Freemasonry includes ancient Judaic Masonic concepts such as the Jachin and Boaz, the two pillars at the entrance of the Temple. Concerning this ancient Jewish masonry, in *James the Brother of Jesus*, Eisenman discusses the Zealot High Priest of the first century, Phineas, who was a "simple Stone-Cutter," commenting: "Though we remarked the 'Stone-Cutter' theme above, we did not connect it at that point to the 'Rechabites' being 'craftsmen' in all traditions, not to mention its latterday spin-off in the ideology of being 'Masons.'"¹⁴ As was the case with priests in earlier times and cultures, the Jewish Zealot high priest of the first century was a *mason*. The Old Testament Rechabite sect, Eisenman states, was composed of "Potters" and distinguished by its emphasis on artisans or craftsmen; according to Eisler, these craftsmen included carpenters and smiths.¹⁵ To reiterate, that there were organizations of craftsmen, potters, carpenters *and masons*, thousands of years ago is obvious, as is their existence within a religious context, i.e., as a sect or cult.

Masonic imagery is given importance in a number of the Dead Sea scrolls, such as "A Firm Foundation" (4Q541), which makes "the usual allusions to 'Wisdom,' [and] 'Mysteries,'" and contains masonic terms, as in its title. In the "Qumran Hymns" appears other imagery of this type, such as "the Cornerstone," "the Tower," "pillars," "wall" and "Fortress."¹⁶ In reality, the scrolls are full of architectural metaphors, including the term "Shoddy-Wall-Builders."¹⁷ Moreover, the scrolls' Zadokite authors reveal their own masonic-like brotherhood, replete with rules, rituals, levels of initiations and harsh

¹¹ Tucker, 78.

¹² Tucker, 135.

¹³ Wallace-Murphy and Hopkins, 113-114.

¹⁴ Eisenman, 406.

¹⁵ Schonfield, 238.

¹⁶ Eisenman and Wise, 142.

¹⁷ Wise, et al., 55.

punishments. Concerning the scrolls writers, Knight and Lomas remark, "Everything we found out about the Qumran Community added to our conviction that they were the spiritual descendants of the Egyptian kings and the antecedents of the Templars and Freemasonry."¹⁸ The scrolls are not the product of a "Qumran community," however, but of a more widespread brotherhood. As Wise says regarding the so-called "Community Rule" found at the Dead Sea, "the work itself refers to various groups or chapters scattered throughout Palestine."¹⁹ Concerning this document, Wise further relates that "virtually every structural element of this ancient Jewish writing has analogs in the charters of guilds and religious associations from Egypt, Greece, and Asia Minor." In other words, it reflects a guild or religious brotherhood, which, it turns out, is immersed in masonic symbolism and thought.

One of the more prominent masonic terms used in the scrolls is "cornerstone," also utilized in the gospels to describe Jesus. Says Eisenman, "The imagery of 'Stone' and 'Cornerstone' is part and parcel of that applied to the Disciples in early Christianity and omnipresent in the Dead Sea Scrolls..."²⁰ "Stone" imagery, of course, includes the Rock, or Disciple Peter, as well. Again, the scrolls' authors, the Zadokites, are asserted by Knight and Lomas to be forerunners of the Knights Templar, who used a peculiar "highly sophisticated secret alphabet,"²¹ much as other secret societies have done. The use of such ciphers was one of the reasons so much concerning Masonry and other mystery cults has been hidden and lost. Interestingly, the Zadokites also used ciphers, or secret writing, to encode some of their texts: Indeed, it is claimed that the "Atbash Cipher" was used by both the scrolls' writers and the Templars. A mysterious and powerful secret society "behind the formation of builders' guilds, including that of the stonemasons,"²² the Templars represent a brotherhood that preserved much of the ancient knowledge, including not only masonry but also astrology, which would make them a continuation of the mysteries.

Increased knowledge of ancient Jewish masonry and its religious significance occurred in 1999, when archaeologists found the "largest stone factory ever discovered in Israel," built some 2,000 years ago. The factory consisted of caverns covering a quarter of an acre 15 feet beneath East Jerusalem, where were found "carved stone mugs, dishes and wine jugs for priests serving in the nearby Jewish Temple." In creating the factory, "Masons cut stone blocks from the walls and ceilings, to be used as raw material while carving out a new workroom."²³ Their stone vessels were used ritually, thus connecting masonic products with religion.

Mithraic Mysteries

Another pre-Christian religious brotherhood that strongly resembled a Masonic organization was Mithraism, as has been noted by a variety of authorities, including the Catholic Encyclopedia and the French scholar Renan. Regarding the Mithraic mysteries,

¹⁸ Knight and Lomas, *HK*, 202.

¹⁹ Wise, et al., 123.

²⁰ Eisenman, 476.

²¹ Wallace-Murphy, 102.

²² Picknett, 110.

²³ abcnews.go.com/sections/science/DailyNews/masonry990624.html

O'Brien says, "The mysteries celebrated within the recesses of those caverns are precisely of that character which are called *Free-masonic* or *Cabiric*."²⁴ It is apparent that, beginning in pre-historic times, caves have served in the performance of mysterious rites. Also, while the Cabirian or Samothracian mysteries are designated as representing smith-craft, they apparently also were "masonic."

As thoroughly demonstrated, Mithraism possesses numerous correspondences to Christianity, correlations that predate the latter religion by centuries if not millennia. These similarities include the Masonic-like structure of Mithraism, especially within the mysteries, the Mithraic revolving around the slain Bull, representing the older age of Taurus, while the Christian had its sacrificed Lamb, or Aries, with an initiation "like the private sign of free-masons."²⁵ A number of important correspondences between Christianity and Masonry are outlined in *The Christ Conspiracy*, which posits that a masonic brotherhood transcending religious sectarianism was responsible for creating Christianity. Concerning Masonic imagery within Christianity, Massey remarks that the key to deciphering it lies in the "Gnostic clue to the Hidden Wisdom." He further says, "Wherever we meet [the Gnostics] they give us the Masonic grip; and by the same sign we know that Paul was a Gnostic." The "wise master-builder" Paul spoke "wisdom amongst the Perfected"²⁶ and referred to "brethren," i.e., members of a brotherhood or fraternity. That major players in the creation of Christianity were members of a brotherhood or brotherhoods is a fact, as is the Masonic structure and terminology used in Christianity.

Jesus the Cornerstone

For example, the phrase describing Jesus as "the cornerstone that the builders rejected" (Mt. 21:42; Mk. 12:10; Lk. 20:17) is a well-known Masonic term, with mystical connotations beyond merely representing a physical stone. In other words, the phrase belongs to a mystery school and secret society, in this case relating to stonecutting or *masonry*. This phrase regarding the "rejected cornerstone" comes from the Old Testament (Psalms 118:22), demonstrating the Masonic influence in Judaism as well. This scripture is supposedly "prophetic"; however, Christian authority Matthew Henry submits that it may originally have referred to David, who was rejected by Saul. In any event, this passage is immediately preceded by "I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, And You have become my salvation." The Hebrew word for "salvation" in this scripture is *Yeshua* or *Jesus*. Thus, a *pre-Christian* reader of the Old Testament would see, "...You have become my Jesus. The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." This messianic passage is not *prophecy* but a *blueprint* for the creation of the Christ character.

The phrase for "cornerstone" in the gospels, and at Acts 4:11 and 1 Peter 2:7, is "kephalen gonias" or "head of the corner." It is translated as "chief cornerstone" in the New King James Version, the HNV and NASB; as "head of the corner" in RSV, Webster's, ASV and YLT; and as "corner-stone" in Darby's.²⁷ The Bible Gateway

²⁴ O'Brien, 354.

²⁵ Higgins, II, 111.

²⁶ Massey, *Lectures*, 33.

²⁷ www.blueletterbible.org/tmp_dir/versions/1010638232.html#17

translates the phrase as "capstone," which is defined as a "coping stone," the "high point" and "crowning achievement." The coping stone is that which tops the corner of a sloping wall; in other words, the "capstone" is the peak of a pyramid, representing the Masonic hierarchy. Building upon Isaiah 28:16, 1 Peter 2:6 discusses the laying in Zion of a foundation stone, "a tested stone, a precious cornerstone of a sure foundation." The phrase for "cornerstone" is "akrogoniaios lithos" in the Greek, defined by Strong's as "placed at an extreme corner, the corner foundation stone." This same Greek phrase is used at Ephesians 2:20, in reference to Christ himself. Knight and Lomas remark that, while the canonical gospels discuss the "rejected cornerstone," the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas portrays Jesus as asking to see "the stone which the builders have rejected," evidently "an exact parallel of the ritual of the Masonic Mark Masonry degree."²⁸

In addition to the "cornerstone" imagery in the New Testament is the masonic terminology in the first letter to the Corinthians (3:9-14), which also uses Isaiah 28:16. In this epistle, Paul discusses "God's building," as well as the importance of a good foundation, which is Jesus Christ, of course. The apostle to the Gentiles calls himself a "skilled master builder," who laid a foundation, upon which "another man is building." The word for "master builder" is ἀρχιτεκτων ("architekton"), which comes from "arche," meaning "beginning" or "origin," etc., and "tekton," or "carpenter." Tekton, the word used to describe Joseph and Jesus as a "carpenter" (Mt. 13:55; Mk. 6:3), also means "builder," "any craftsman, or workman," a poet, songwriter, author and "planner, contriver, plotter." Interestingly, in modern Greek the word for "carpenter" is "marangos," not tekton. In fact, "tekton" in modern Greek means *freemason*, while the word for "stonemason" is κτιστής ("ktistes").²⁹ "Freemasonry" in modern Greek is τεκτωνισμός or "tektonism." Hence, the term tekton, used to describe Jesus, was passed along over the centuries as a reference to a member of a *Masonic brotherhood*, rather than a carpenter or a simple stone-cutting workman.

The contention that Jesus himself is a "master builder" is logical, considering that both God and Paul were also deemed as such, and that Jesus is called the "capstone" of an obviously Masonic organization. Following upon the work of predecessors centuries past, in *The Hiram Key* is a chapter entitled, "Jesus Christ: Man, God, Myth or Freemason?" Since "Jesus Christ" is all things to all people, these authors wish to make him into a Freemason, no doubt to the chagrin of anti-Masonic Christian factions.

Furthermore, at Hebrews 11:10, the author states, "For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." The original Greek word for "builder" is τεχνιτης ("tekhmites" or "technites") which means "builder," "artificer" or "craftsmen" and which is also used at Acts 19:24 and 19:38, as well as Revelation 18:22. In Hebrews, "technites" refers to a *masonic* craftsmen, as opposed to a carpenter or smith. The word in this scripture for "maker" is *demiourgos*, i.e., demiurge, defined by Strong's as meaning "the author of any work, an artisan, framer, builder," signifying carpenter and *mason*. It has been asserted that Revelation 2:17 is a Masonic initiation, with its discussion of "hidden manna" and a "white stone" with a "new name" on it, known only to an initiate.

²⁸ Knight and Lomas, *HK*, 41.

²⁹ *Collins Contemporary Greek Dictionary*, 168, 311; *Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek*, 189.

In *The Devil's Pulpit*, a series of lectures for which he was imprisoned on "blasphemy" charges, English Rev. Robert Taylor endeavored to "prove Free Masonry to be the combined result of the Egyptian, Jewish, and Christian superstitions, and absolutely identical with the celebrated Eleusinian Mysteries of Greece, the Dionysian Mysteries, or orgies of Bacchus and the Christian Mysteries of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ..."³⁰ Taylor further stated that "the terms *Christians, Jews, Israelites* and *Hebrews* are not names of communities that ever existed in a national or political character, but are designations of the different degrees, or grades of initiation in the mysteries of masonry."³¹ In other words, these terms were titles given to higher initiates in these mysteries; thus, the canonical Epistle to the Hebrews represents instruction of the higher initiates into the mysteries, also called Freemasonry. It is evident that the epistle is not written for a national group but for a mystical sect and religious fraternity. Taylor also asserted that only by one's initiation into a particular "Masonic" mystery sect could one be involved in building temples and theaters within that religion. In other words, only those knowledgeable in the Dionysian mysteries could be involved in building Dionysian religious sites, etc.

Masonry plays an important role in biblical metaphors, which is sensible since the Bible's creators surely knew that stone foundations and buildings last the longest. Also, as is the case today, the people who erected stone edifices in ancient times were often quite wealthy and powerful, capable of creating a religion such as Christianity.

The Solar Master Craftsman

Like the solar demiurge, a number of gods have been "master craftsmen" of some sort or another, such as Agni, the Vedic fire and sun god, and Agni's father, Tvashtar, who was a "modeler," "divine artist," "carpenter," etc. A god as a "master builder" or stone mason is a pre-Christian motif, as demonstrated by the concept of "God," whether as Ptah, Osiris or other, as the "Grand Architect." Verifying this association in his diatribe *Against the Heathen Gods*, Christian writer Commodianus remarks:

Ye make Neptune a god descended from Saturn; and he wields a trident that he may spear the fishes. It is plain by his being thus provided that he is a sea-god. Did not he himself with Apollo raise up walls for the Trojans? How did that poor stone-mason become a god?³²

Not only is Neptune, or Poseidon, a mason god, but Apollo, a sun god, is also a mason who helped build the walls of Troy, confirming the association of the sun with masonry, long before the Christian era. Moreover, in one of his lives the "sun of God" Buddha was also a mason.

The solar origin and meaning behind Masonic myth and ritual were explained succinctly by Thomas Paine in his erudite essay, "Origin of Freemasonry," in which he stated that Christianity and Masonry "have one and the same common origin: Both are derived from the worship of the Sun." Col. Olcott likewise described the solar iconography and ritual of Masonry, quoting *Stellar Theology* by Robert Brown, Jr., who declared that "Masonic

³⁰ Taylor, *DP*, 245.

³¹ Taylor, *DP*, 253.

³² www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-04/anf04-38.htm

tradition" was "one of the numerous allegories" of the sun's yearly passage through the zodiac and its 12 constellations. This "system of astronomical symbols and emblems" was used to "teach the great truths about the omnipotent God and immortality." The term "Masonry" supposedly comes from a Greek word meaning "I am in the midst of heaven," a reference to the sun. In discussing the term "Tith-On," Bryant says that in Greek it means "μασος ηλίου": *the mount of the Sun*.³³ The word here for "mount" is "masos," which in the accusative would be "mason." As such, "mason" represents an ancient word, found in Greek and possessing a lithic meaning and solar association.

Olcott further outlines a number of salient correspondences between Masonry and sun worship and remarks, "The Sun, overwhelmed by the three autumn months, returns to life at the vernal equinox, and is exalted at the summer solstice. In this drama the candidate was required to represent the Sun, and a solar significance characterizes the whole ritual."³⁴ In addition, the orientation of the Masonic lodges is based on the sun's positions, aligned east and west, as is typical for sacred structures such as temples and churches. A number of Masonic terms are astrotheological, such as E.A.M., M.M. and O.G.M.H.A., which signify the sun, and F.C.M., which represents the moon. The Masons also celebrate the solstices, or specifically June 24th and December 27th, dates with "purely astronomical significance." Also, the two "St. John's Days" are pre-Christian and very important within Masonry, representing ancient sun worship.³⁵ Moreover, the "all-seeing eye is distinctly solar in its character."³⁶

One of the "modern" Masonic "mantras"—the name of the Great Architect—is "Jahbulon" or "Jahbelon," which breaks down into Jah, Bel and On,³⁷ three ancient names of the God Sun. The "Excellent High Priest" of Masonic ritual explains that these words are the "Masonic god in Syriac, Chaldeic and Egyptian."³⁸ Ronayne remarks that the name for the Lord in Masonry, "GAOTU," an acronym for "Great Architect of the Universe," is "the old pagan title of Baal or the sun god."³⁹ Interestingly, according to Bryant the word "Cabal" means the "place of Baal." Ronayne further relates that the Greater Mysteries in Freemasonry introduce to the initiate "the alleged conflict, death, burial, and raising of Hiram, constituting, as they do, the Egyptian legend of Osiris, or Baal, without even a single change."⁴⁰ He then states that Osiris and the "Tyrian architect" Hiram Abiff "are one and the same, not a mortal individual, but an immortal principle." Ronayne next comments, "Hence, then, we are driven to the inevitable conclusion that the Masonic system is a horrible mixture of paganism and Judaism..."⁴¹

It is evident that the astrotheology of the ancients has been known by Masonic initiates, as exemplified by the fact that their main deity is essentially the God Sun. Manly Hall, a 33rd-degree Mason and author of over 200 books on all aspects of esoterica, declared that all religion resolved itself into astrology, i.e., was astrotheological. In the "Royal Arch

³³ Bryant, 418.

³⁴ Olcott, 304-305.

³⁵ Knight and Lomas, *SM*, 67

³⁶ Olcott, 305-306.

³⁷ Ronayne, 272.

³⁸ Ronayne, 282.

³⁹ Ronayne, 101.

⁴⁰ Ronayne, 125.

⁴¹ Ronayne, 125.

Opening" the "Captain of the Host" is asked by the Excellent High Priest what the "four vails" (coverings in the "outer courts of the Tabernacle") symbolize, to which he answers that they are the "principal tribes of Israel," i.e., Judah, Ephraim, Reuben and Dan, signifying the Lion, Ox, Man and Eagle.⁴² These four, of course, represent the cardinal points of the year in the Age of Taurus, i.e., the four zodiacal signs of Leo, Taurus, Aquarius and Scorpio. These designations reflect antiquity, as the Age of Taurus occurred approximately 4450-2300 BCE.

Masonry in History

"Masonry" by whatever name has been a more or less organized fraternity for centuries to millennia, reflected in ancient stone buildings and archaic priestly rituals that go hand in hand. This assertion does not insist that a single fraternity has held the keys of power throughout history; on the contrary, various factions, more or less loosely connected, have vied fervently for the top spot. In modern times, Masonic organizations have had a tremendous impact on culture, particular in the Western world. "It is no secret that Masonry was a moving force behind the American Revolution and the founding of the Republic of the United States of America."⁴³ American Founding Fathers who allegedly were Masons included: "George Washington...Benjamin Franklin, Ethan Allen, John Hancock, John Paul Jones, Paul Revere, Robert Livingston, and 35 other lesser known men who were signers of the Declaration of Independence and/or the Constitution." The contention that Thomas Jefferson was a Mason is questionable, since the historical record reports the extent of his "involvement" as limited to one visit to a Masonic lodge in South Carolina. In any case, per Stephen Knight, 17 American presidents have been Masons, including, at the time of his writing, Ford and Reagan.⁴⁴

Since Masonry played such a role in as momentous an event as the founding and governing of the USA, as well as numerous other nations and/or governments, it is difficult to believe that it also was instrumental in the creation of various religions. Especially since it is *masons* and their benefactors who build the temples, churches and cathedrals? It is apparent that masons saw themselves as builders of religions. As David Yallop shows in *In God's Name*, Masonic organizations continue to create mayhem upon this planet, specifically in the name of the Catholic religion. Magistrate and Mason Godfrey Higgins declared that the Pope, "who holds many secret things" is the "Grand Master of the Masons," the "Grand Master-Mason of the world."⁴⁵ Naturally, in its play for global domination the Church has placed itself in competition with "Masonry," or at least various factions of it. In his examination of the Christian mysteries, Massey remarks that "the war of the Papacy against Masonry is because it is a survival of the pre-Christian Mysteries, and a living, however, imperfect, witness against Historic Christianity!"⁴⁶ Masonic rituals are also carried out within the higher levels of the religion of Mormonism; yet, few acknowledge this fact or criticize the Mormon hierarchy for its Masonic origins, similar to those of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

⁴² Ronayne, 193.

⁴³ Knight and Lomas, *HK*, 354.

⁴⁴ Knight, S., 34.

⁴⁵ Higgins, I, 823fn.

⁴⁶ Massey, 58.

The denial of these facts concerning Masonry and its role in world events and institutions, including and especially religion, may occur out of obstinacy, naivete or ignorance, or the denier may be part of the fraternity, bound by oaths of secrecy. In reality, many germane facts concerning Masonry are not widely known because of the various blood oaths taken by Masons, including one in which the penalty is "having my skull smote off and my brains exposed to the scorching rays of the noonday sun..."⁴⁷

Knowing that there were countless fraternities and secret societies "up and down the Roman Empire," a number of which represented craft guilds or cults such as that of the smithy and carpenter, it is illogical to insist that there no such organized *masonic* religious orders, particularly in view of how important were stone-working and stone edifices to secular and religious leaders alike, although the distinction has often been slight to non-existent. The rulers of the ages were well aware of the significance of stone in producing "immortality," i.e., impregnability and indestructibility, as they desired their monuments, buildings, temples, treasuries, fortifications and tombs be made out of it. Included in the grand buildings of most parts of the world—especially the temples, churches and cathedrals—are numerous astrological motifs and symbols. It is a *fact* that religion, astrology and masonry go hand in hand. In reality, Masonry as a politico-religious brotherhood goes back much further than is maintained and has been very active in the creation of many cultures. One of the most potent brotherhood creations is Jesus Christ, Mason of God.

⁴⁷ Ronayne, 221.

Moon Mary, Queen of Heaven

“There is but one god and goddess, but many are their powers and names: Jupiter, Sol, Apollo, Moses, Christ, Luna, Ceres, Proserpina, Tellus, Mary. But have a care in speaking these things. They should be hidden in silence as are the Eleusinian mysteries; sacred things must needs be wrapped in fable and enigma.”¹

Konrad Muth/Mutianus (1471-1526)

As is the case with Jesus Christ himself, the godman’s parents, Joseph and Mary, never appear in the contemporary historical record of the time they allegedly existed. Nor are they mentioned in non-gospel Christian writings earlier than the purported time of Church father Ignatius (d. 107 CE). Oddly enough, the Islamic sacred text, the Koran, places Jesus and Mary in the same era as *Moses*, or the 13th century BCE. Indeed, Arabs believed that Jesus was *Joshua*, the Old Testament prophet, and that Joshua’s mother was “Mirzam,” the *Miriam* of Exodus, sister of Moses and Aaron.² In this regard, Joshua is *Jesus* in Greek, and both Mirzam and Miriam are equivalent to Mariam or *Mary*. As *Strong’s Concordance* (Gk. 3137) relates: “Mary or Miriam=‘their rebellion.’” The Persians likewise believed that Joshua’s mother was the Mosaic Miriam. Hence, according to Near Eastern tradition there appeared a Jesus, son of Mary, over a thousand years prior to the Christian era. Moreover, like Jesus, who was called “Emmanuel” (Mt. 1:23), a “Persian title of ‘the god Immani,’ or ‘E-mani,’ venerated in Elam as a sacred king-martyr,” the *Persian* savior Mani was said to have been “born of a virgin named Mary.”³

The Virgin Goddess

In reality, the ancient world abounded with traditions, prophecies, fables and myths of miraculous conceptions and births, long before the Christian era, and the virgin-mother motif is common enough in pre-Christian cultures to demonstrate its unoriginality and non-historicity within Christianity. In early Christian times, Mary herself was believed to have been born of a virgin, which, if taken literally, would represent a virgin birth prior to Christ, rendering his own nativity unoriginal and mundane, rather than miraculous and divine. One source of Mary’s immaculate conception was Christian writer and saint John of Damascus (c. 676-c. 754-787), who asserted that Mary’s parents were “filled and purified by the Holy Ghost, and freed from sexual concupiscence.” Concerning this matter, the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (“Immaculate Conception”) states that “even the human element” of Mary’s origin, “the material of which she was formed, was pure and holy.” In other words, Roman Catholic doctrine dictates that, like Jesus, “the Blessed Virgin Mary” was “conceived without sin.”⁴ In order to maintain the “uniqueness” of Christ’s virgin birth, however, this contention regarding Mary is not taken seriously. What it proves, nonetheless, is that fabulous Christian claims are based on pious *speculation*, not historical fact, speculation by the faithful that changes from era to era, depending on the need.

¹ Seznec, 99.

² Robertson, 297.

³ Walker, 428.

⁴ Hackwood, 17.

As it turns out, the Virgin Mary is, like Jesus Christ, a *mythical* character, founded upon older *goddesses*. Following on the heels of goddesses such as Aphrodite, Astarte, Cybele, Demeter, Hathor, Inanna, Ishtar and Isis, Mary is “both virgin and mother, and, like many of them, she gives birth to a half-human, half-divine child, who dies and is reborn.”⁵ Regarding the Great Mother Goddess, upon whom Mary is based and whose names are legion, in *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity* Francis Legge says:

Her most prominent characteristics show her to be a personification of the Earth, the mother of all living, ever bringing forth and ever a virgin...⁶

In *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, Edward Carpenter recites a long list of virgin mothers:

Zeus, Father of the gods, visited Semele...in the form of a thunderstorm; and she gave birth to the great saviour and deliverer Dionysus. Zeus, again, impregnated Danae in a shower of gold; and the child was Perseus... Devaki, the radiant Virgin of the Hindu mythology, became the wife of the god Vishnu and bore Krishna, the beloved hero and prototype of Christ. With regard to Buddha, St. Jerome says “It is handed down among the Gymnosophists of India that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a Virgin from her side.” The Egyptian Isis, with the child Horus on her knee, was honored centuries before the Christian era, and worshipped under the names of “Our Lady,” “Queen of Heaven,” “Star of the Sea,” “Mother of God,” and so forth. Before her, Neith, the Virgin of the World, whose figure bends from the sky over the earthly plains and the children of men, was acclaimed as mother of the great god Osiris...

The old Teutonic goddess Hertha (the Earth) was a Virgin, but was impregnated by the heavenly Spirit (the Sky); and her image with a child in her arms was to be seen in the sacred groves of Germany. The Scandinavian Frigga, in much the same way, being caught in the embraces of Odin, the All-father, conceived and bore a son, the blessed Balder, healer and saviour of mankind. Quetzalcoatl, the (crucified) saviour of the Aztecs, was the son of Chimalman, the Virgin Queen of Heaven. Even the Chinese had a mother-goddess and virgin with child in her arms; and the ancient Etruscans the same...⁷

In addition to the omnipresent mother-and-child imagery beginning at least five millennia ago are the *black* virgin-mother statues found all over the Mediterranean and especially in Italian churches, representing the very ancient Egyptian goddess Isis, as well as the later Mary, having been refigured or “baptized anew” as the Jewish Mother of God. Concerning this development, in its article the “Virgin Birth of Christ” the Catholic Encyclopedia (“CE”) remarks:

A first class of writers have recourse to pagan mythology in order to account for the early Christian tradition concerning the virgin birth of Jesus. Usener argues that the early Gentile Christians must have attributed to Christ what their pagan ancestors had attributed to their pagan heroes; hence the Divine sonship of Christ is a product of the religious thought of Gentile Christians.... Conrady found in the Virgin Mary a Christian imitation of the Egyptian goddess Isis, the mother of Horus...

Naturally, the CE does not concur with the scholar Conrady’s conclusion; nevertheless, this highest of Catholic authorities acknowledges the presence of the virgin-birth motif in pre-Christian cultures.

⁵ Baring, 548.

⁶ Legge, II, 45.

⁷ Carpenter, 159-161.

Concerning the usurpation of the Virgin Mother by Christianity, which simply constituted the changing of the goddess from one ethnicity to another, in *The Paganism in Our Christianity* apologist Sir Arthur Weigall observes:

...while the story of the death and resurrection of Osiris may have influenced the thought of the earliest Christians in regard to the death and resurrection of our Lord, there can be no doubt that the myths of Isis had a direct bearing upon the elevation of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to her celestial position in the Roman Catholic theology... In her aspect as the mother of Horus, Isis was represented in tens of thousands of statuettes and paintings, holding the divine child in her arms; and when Christianity triumphed these paintings and figures became those of the Madonna and Child without any break in continuity: no archaeologist, in fact, can now tell whether some of these objects represent the one or the other.⁸

Like the Christian Mary and Egyptian Isis, the Canaanite goddess Astarte, mentioned in the Old Testament, was the “Virgin of the Sea,” as well as the “blessed Mother and Lady of the Waters.”⁹ Another virgin goddess was the mother of the Phrygian god Attis, whose widespread worship “must have influenced the early Christians.” As Weigall recounts:

Attis was the Good Shepherd, the son of Cybele, the Great Mother, or alternatively, of the Virgin Nana, who conceived him without union with mortal man, as in the story of the Virgin Mary... In Rome the festival of his death and resurrection was annually held from March 22nd to 25th; and the connection of this religion with Christianity is shown by the fact that in Phrygia, Gaul, Italy and other countries where Attis-worship was powerful, the Christians adopted the actual date, March 25th, as the anniversary of our Lord’s passion.¹⁰

The pre-Christian virgin goddess *Myrrha* was the mother of the god Adonis, who tradition holds was born at Bethlehem, “in the same sacred cave that Christians later claimed as the birthplace of Jesus.” Indeed, Myrrha was “identified with Mary by early Christians who called Jesus’s mother Myrrh of the Sea.”¹¹

Also a product of a virgin birth, the Indian avatar Buddha’s conception is portrayed as coming to his mother, Maya, in a dream, similar to the conflicting gospel tales of Joseph’s dream or the angel appearing to Mary. Regarding Buddha, in *Christianity Before Christ* John Jackson states:

He was said to have been born of the Virgin Maya, or Mary. His incarnation was accomplished by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Virgin Maya. The infant Buddha, soon after birth, spoke to his mother, saying: “I will put to an end to the sufferings and sorrows of the world.” As these words are uttered, a mystical light surrounded the infant Messiah.¹²

The virgin-born motif attached to Buddha was so well known by the 19th century that it was even published in a newspaper, *The New York Correspondent* (1828), which related that the ancient Chinese god “Beddou,” born in 1027 BCE as one of God’s “incessant”

⁸ Weigall, 121-123.

⁹ Baring, 459.

¹⁰ Weigall, 115-116.

¹¹ Walker, 10.

¹² Jackson, 87.

incarnations, sprang from the “right intercostal of a virgin of the royal blood, who, when she became a mother, did not the less continue to be a virgin.”¹³

This mythical theme is not uncommon, as the birth through the *side* of the virgin was also claimed of Jesus by early Christian “heretics.” It was likewise said that Julius Caesar was born through the “side of his mother,” whence comes the term “Caesarean section.” So too was the Egyptian sun god Ra “born from the side of his mother,”¹⁴ a motif that reflects the relationship between the sun and moon. Part of the “lunar phenomenon,” the mother’s womb symbolizes the moon, in which the solar child can be seen growing. Hence, Buddha’s mother, Maya, was depicted as transparent, as was the pregnant Mary, “as may be seen in Didron’s Iconography!”¹⁵

Like Buddha’s mother, Queen Maya, the carpenter’s wife Mary is also a “queen,” as in “Queen of Heaven.” Precursor of Mary, the immensely popular Isis’s status as “Queen of Heaven” was established eons before, and continued well into, the common era. In his Latin novel of the second century CE, *The Golden Ass* (XI.2), Lucius Apuleius describes Isis’s introduction of herself to the “hapless quadruped” as follows:

“I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of heaven, the principal of the gods celestial, the light of the goddesses. At my will the planets of the air, the wholesome winds of the seas and the silences of hell are disposed. My name, my divinity, is adored throughout the world, in divers manners, in variable customs and in many names, for the Phrygians call me the mother of the gods; the Athenians, Minerva; the Cyprians, Venus; the Candians, Diana; the Sicilians, Proserpina; the Eleusinians, Ceres; some Juno, others Bellona, others Hecate; and principally the Ethiopians who dwell in the Orient, and the Egyptians...do call me Queen Isis.”¹⁶

As can be seen, Isis was fervently revered as the epitome of Divinity, long before Mary achieved that rank.

Mary, Goddess of the Moon

The virgin-goddess “Queen of Heaven” is prevalent in the ancient world for the reason that she is astrological or *astrotheological*, symbolizing the moon, the earth, Venus, Virgo and the dawn. The many goddesses thus resolve themselves to variants on a theme, one of which is the *moon*, a feature of the ubiquitous sun-god mythos, in which the moon, by mirroring the sun’s light, “gives birth” to the sun. In *Christ Lore*, Hackwood describes the astrotheological development of this theme:

The Virgin Mary is called not only the Mother of God, but the Queen of Heaven. This connects her directly with *astronomic lore*. The ornamentation of many continental churches often includes a representation of the Sun and Moon “in conjunction,” the Moon being therein emblematical of the Virgin and Child....

As the Moon...is the symbol of Mary, Queen of Heaven, so also a bright Star sometimes

¹³ Graves, 373.

¹⁴ Bonwick, 107.

¹⁵ Massey, 181.

¹⁶ Siculus, 31fn.

symbolizes him whose star was seen over Jerusalem by the Wise Men from the East.¹⁷

The many depictions of Mary with the crescent moon reflect her status as the ancient moon goddess, exemplified by the Egyptian goddess Isis.

While paradoxically asserting that they were “real people,” in his book dating to the first century BCE on Egyptian antiquities, Greek writer Diodorus Siculus affirms that the Egyptian god Osiris symbolizes the sun while his wife/sister, Isis, is the moon:

Now when the ancient Egyptians, awestruck and wondering, turned their eyes to the heavens, they concluded that two gods, the sun and the moon, were primeval and eternal; and they called the former Osiris, the latter Isis, assigning each of these names according to some relevant characteristic...

...Now Isis, in translation, signifies “ancient”—a name bestowed for her ancient and immortal origin. They depict horns on her head, both from the moon’s horned appearance when in its crescent, and because the horned cow is sacred to her among the Egyptians.¹⁸

Regarding the fabled Isis, in *The Origin of All Religious Worship* abbé Charles Dupuis says:

The denomination of Isis, which was given to the Moon, is confirmed by Porphyrius [Porphyry, 233-c. 303 CE] and by other authors; from which we draw a necessary inference, which is, that the career of Isis is merely the career of the Moon...¹⁹

As the “woman in the moon,” Isis also was the goddess of the sea, *Mari* or *Meri*, as in “Stella Maris,” a title later bestowed upon the Christian Mary. Like Mary, Isis was distinguished as the “Mother of God” and “Magna Mater” or Great Mother; nevertheless, as is proper for goddesses, Isis retained her virginity, maintaining her epithets of “Immaculate Virgin”²⁰ and the “uncontaminated goddess.”²¹

Concerning Isis’s prototype, the Egyptian lunar virgin goddess Neith, who predated the Christian era by millennia, in *The Ancient Gods* Rev. James observes:

...She too was the virgin mother of the Sun-god, having given birth to Re [Ra] as the great cow, and was identified with Isis as the wife of Osiris, later becoming one of the forms of Hathor. Indeed, she was “the Great Goddess, the mother of all the gods.”...

...She was eternal, self-existing, self-sustaining and all-pervading, personifying the female principle from very early times. She was believed to have brought forth the transcendent Sun-god without the aid of a male partner, very much as in the Memphite Theology Ptah created all things virtually *ex nihilo* by thinking as the “heart” and commanding as the “tongue.”²²

Virgo and the Sun

The virgin-mother goddess represents not only the moon but also the constellation of Virgo. This important information regarding the Virgin is found in ancient texts, such as

¹⁷ Hackwood, 30-31.

¹⁸ Siculus, 14-15.

¹⁹ Dupuis, 99.

²⁰ Bonwick, 141.

²¹ James, 86.

²² James, 84.

the *Eclogues* (37 BCE) of the Roman poet Virgil, in which is described or “prophesied” the “return of the virgin,” i.e., Virgo, who would bring about “a new breed of men sent down from heaven,” as well as the birth of a boy “in whom...the golden race [shall] arise.” This virgin-born “golden boy” is in actuality the *sun*.

Commenting on the Virgo-Sun relationship, the author of *Christianity Mythology Unveiled* notes:

In the ancient zodiacs of India and Egypt, there is seen this virgin nursing a male child, with sun rays around his head...which is emblematical of the infant sun at the winter solstice, and of his being then in the sign of the Virgo.²³

One of these “Madonnas and Child” was, of course, Isis, about whom CMU states:

According to Eratosthenes [276-194 BCE], the celestial Virgin [Virgo] was supposed to be Isis, that is, the symbol of the returning year. It was in honour of this goddess that the Egyptians celebrated the famous festival of light, which was imitated by the Christians in their feast of Candelmas. From the Egyptians, the Romans took their Solar festivals, in honour of the birth of the god of light, celebrated on the 25th of December, at which time, says Servius, the Sun may, properly speaking, be said to be anew, or to have a new birth. Hence the Christmas of the Christians, which had also been previously, a Druidic festival, in honour of the solar God’s birth...²⁴

Regarding the solar nativity, in *The Golden Bough* Sir Frazer further explicates:

The ritual of the nativity, as it appears to have been celebrated in Syria and Egypt, was remarkable. The celebrants retired into certain inner shrines, from which at midnight they issued with a loud cry, “The Virgin has brought forth! The light is waxing!” The Egyptians even represented the new-born sun by the image of an infant which on his birthday, the winter solstice, they brought forth and exhibited to his worshippers. No doubt the Virgin who thus conceived and bore a son on the twenty-fifth of December was the great Oriental goddess whom the Semites called the Heavenly Virgin or simply the Heavenly Goddess...²⁵

In *The Story of Religious Controversy* (X), ex-priest Joseph McCabe describes the scene of the Egyptian “Christmas” festival and its proximity to Christianity:

...[The Egyptian sun god Horus] was represented as a babe born in a stable, his mother Isis standing by. Just in the same way is the birth of Christ dramatized today in every Roman Catholic church in the world on December 25th. The Roman writer Macrobius makes the same statement about the representation of the birth of Horus in the temples (Saturnalia, I., 18), and adds that the young god was a symbol of the rebirth of the sun at that date. The fact is, at all events, beyond question. We are brought to the very threshold of Christianity. The whole world by the year 1 A.D. was familiar with the Egyptian statues or pictures of Isis with the divine babe Horus in her arms.

The widely celebrated celestial spectacle was discussed by the author of the Christian text *The Chronicon Paschale*, “Pascal Chronicle” or “Chronicle of Alexandria,” which depicts the annual festival of the nativity of Horus, Isis’s solar son. The Paschal Chronicle is a compilation finalized in the 7th century CE that seeks to establish a

²³ CMU, 105.

²⁴ CMU, 87-88fn.

²⁵ Frazer, 416.

Christian chronology from “creation” to the year 628, focusing on the date of Easter. In establishing this date, the Christian authors naturally addressed astronomy/astrology, since such is the basis of the commemoration of Easter, a pre-Christian festival celebrated at the vernal equinox, or spring, when the *sun* of God is resurrected in full glory from his winter death. The vernal equinox during the current Age of Pisces commences on March 21st and lasts three days, until March 25th, after which the sun overcomes the darkness, and the days begin to become longer than the night. Hence, “Easter”—named for the goddess Astoreth—truly represents the resurrection of the *sun* of God.

As does Latin authority Macrobius (5th cent. CE), the Paschal Chronicle recounts that the newborn sun (Horus) was presented to the public every year at the winter solstice, as a babe in a manger. The pertinent part of the Chronicle reads as follows:

“To this day, Egypt has consecrated the pregnancy of a virgin, and the nativity of her son, whom they annually present in a cradle, to the adoration of the people; and when king Ptolemy, three hundred and fifty years before our Christian era, demanded of the priests the significance of this religious ceremony, they told him it was a mystery.”²⁶

The Chronicle author(s) further confirms that Christianity is a continuation of the ancient *astrotheological* religion when he states that the “Annunciation of our Lady,” i.e., the conception of Christ by the Virgin Mary, occurred on March 25th, the vernal equinox, exactly nine months prior to the December 25th birthdate, at the winter solstice.²⁷

While the masses have been kept in the dark, the knowledgeable elite have been aware of what the Virgin truly represents, even as they have attempted sophistically to explain “her” relationship to the “earthly” life of “our Lord.” Concerning the astrotheological nature of the gospel story, including the virgin birth/immaculate conception, the famous Christian theologian and saint Albertus Magnus, or Albert the Great (1193?-1280), admitted:

“We know that the sign of the celestial Virgin did come to the horizon at the moment where we have fixed the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. All the mysteries of the incarnation of our Saviour Christ; and all the circumstances of his marvellous life, from his conception to his ascension, are to be traced out in the constellations, and are figured in the stars.”²⁸

The virgin birth thus refers to the hour of midnight, December 25th, when the constellation of Virgo rises on the horizon.

Another example of the ancient astrotheology appears in the observance of the “Assumption of the Virgin,” celebrated in Catholicism on August 15th, when the Virgin Mary was “assumed” or “taken up.” The observance is not representative of an actual event that happened to an historical character but commemorates the time when the constellation of the Virgin is “rendered invisible by the solar rays.”²⁹ In other words, the summer sun’s brightness blots out Virgo. Mary’s Nativity, observed on September 8th, occurs when the constellation is visible again.

²⁶ CMU, 100.

²⁷ CP, 166.

²⁸ CMU, 97-98.

²⁹ Higgins, I, 6.

An astrotheological theme regarding Mary is also reflected in the Gospel of John (Jn. 19:41-42), which depicts one of Jesus's *multiple* crucifixions. In contrast to the Golgotha/Calvary of the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, John places Jesus's crucifixion near a garden, where Jesus was subsequently laid to rest. This crucifixion, CMU explains, "has allusion to the autumnal equinox, when the sun *crosses* the line of the equator, in September," a time when it is appropriate to be in a "fruit garden, or vineyard." In John's garden crucifixion, Jesus's mother stands near her son, an element omitted by the other evangelists. The explanation for this motif is that Mary, as the constellation of Virgo, can only appear at the autumnal equinox; she is nowhere to be found at the vernal equinox, or Calvary. The Virgin, as the genius of the month of August/September, "stands by" the autumnal equinox or "crossification" of the sun.

The goddess is not only the moon and Virgo but also the dawn, who daily gives birth to the sun. By eminent Christian Egyptologist E.A. Wallis Budge's assessment, the versatile Isis is likewise "the deity of the dawn," which, according to very ancient mythology, would make her "inviolable" and "eternal," i.e., a perpetual virgin.³⁰ Even Christian writers have understood the connection between the Virgin and the dawn, as exemplified in "one of the homilies of St. Amedus on the Virgin," which includes the following regarding Mother Mary:

"She is the Fountain that waters the whole earth, the Dawn that precedes the True Sun. She is the health (salus) of all, the reconciler (conciliatrix) of the whole world, the inventress of grace, the generatrix of life, the mother of salvation."³¹

As is evident, the worship of the Virgin Isis was eventually and nearly seamlessly transformed into that of the Virgin Mary:

The worship of the Virgin as the Theotokos or Mother of God, which was introduced into the Catholic Church about the time of the destruction of the Serapeum, enabled the devotees of Isis to continue unchecked their worship of the mother goddess by merely changing the name of the object of their adoration, and Prof. Drexler gives a long list of the statues of Isis which thereafter were used, sometimes with unaltered attributes, as those of the Virgin Mary.³²

Indeed, as Weigall elucidates, Christianity in general constitutes a rehash of Paganism:

From Pagan mythology Christianity had unconsciously taken over many a wonderful story and had incorporated it into the life of Jesus...

...many of the old heathen gods had been taken into the Church as saints. Castor and Pollux became St. Cosmo and St. Damien; Dionysos, many of whose attributes were attached to St. John the Baptist, still holds his place as St. Denis of Paris... All over Christendom, pagan sacred places were perpetuated by the erection of Christian chapels or churches on the same sites; and there are hundreds of shrines dedicated to the Madonna on ground once sacred to nymphs or goddesses, while the holy wells or springs of heathendom are now the holy wells of the Church. The statues of Jupiter and Apollo became those of St. Peter and St. Paul; and the figures of Isis were turned into those of

³⁰ Budge, cxiv.

³¹ Lundy, 221.

³² Legge, I, 85.

the Virgin Mary...³³

Not only was the worship of Isis usurped by that of Mary but also the countless apparitions believed by prior worshippers to be the Egyptian goddess were subsequently asserted to be appearances by the Virgin Mary. Although many Christians feel that such visions of “Mary” and “Jesus” *prove* the validity of their belief system, the fact is that apparitions of numerous gods and goddesses to their millions of followers have been quite common globally, in a wide variety of cultures, beginning centuries and millennia prior to the Christian era. The purported appearance of a god or goddess does *not*, therefore, prove the validity of any particular religion, or it would ensue that *every* faith in which believers have allegedly seen their god or gods would constitute the “one, true religion.”

In the end, like her Son the Sun, the Virgin Moon Mary is a mythical character based on older goddesses who were themselves astrotheological personifications of celestial and earthly bodies and principles. In its most poetic, feminine manifestation, the ancient astrotheology reached exquisite zeniths befitting the Divine Mother of All, flawlessly formless beyond all cultural camouflage and ethnic exteriority.

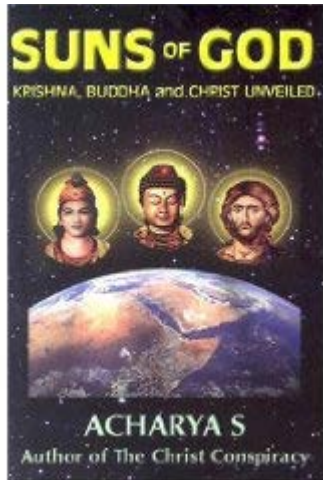
³³ Weigall, 204-208.

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